

JERSEY BEAT

New Jersey's New-Music Nexus

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April - May 82

POP! Go The

50¢



...BONGOS!

editorial

THE BEAT GOES ON

Anybody remember 1976? The only rock club in New Jersey was the Showplace in Dover; everyplace else would only book heavy-metal cover bands. "Frampton Comes Alive" was breaking every record on the charts, and Americans eagerly awaited the latest shipment from England of "Anarchy In The U.K."

It's still too early the pop the champagne corks and declare victory. Reagan is still president and REO still sells an awful lot of records. But the chart successes of Joan Jett and the Go Go's are heartening; and the possibility that the Bongos and the Fleshtones may follow is thrilling. New-wave meant neighborhood bands, springing from garages, making music for their friends, then inevitably taking over the World. It hasn't happened yet, but at least it's become a truism that the most vital new rock and roll is coming from the neighborhoods and not, as a pal of mine would say, from Corporate Amerocka.

JERSEY BEAT is happy to be back for a second issue, playing our small role in the unmaking of America's national standard of mediocrity. Read our little magazine, then go out and do your part. Buy the records we recommend (and even the ones we don't). Check out the bands and clubs we write about. Patronize our advertisers. Take a punk to lunch. Dance dance dance, and put your money where your feet are.

It's called trickle-down economics. Don't you read the papers?

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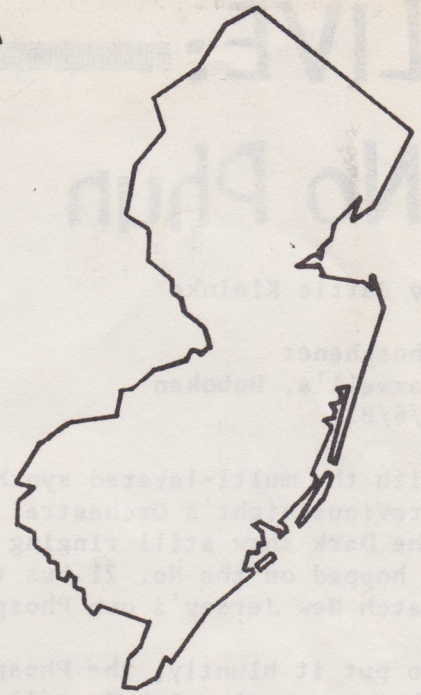
Editor: Jim Testa

Staff: Pattie Kleinke, Gary Cahill, Pat Clarke, Larry C.

Cover photo: Phil Marino

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THE BEAT



BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME DEPT.: Pat Clarke's promotions at the tiny backroom of Harrisons Silver Dollar Saloon provided a lot of fun for far too few but they're over now, due to disagreements with the ownership...Here's a coincidence: The last Jersey club to suffer this fate was Hoboken's Mile Square City, briefly booked by Joe Foy & filled with happy hardcore and nifty new-wave; the last show there was a Hardcore extravaganza with Adrenalin O.D. and Even Worse on the bill...And the last Hardcore show at the Silver Dollar? Would you believe Adrenalin O.D. and Even Worse?...

Incidentally, with no more shows at the Silver Dollar, a strict no-punk policy at Maxwells and the Dirt Club, and after the fights that disrupted the Red Rockers show at Hitsville, it looks like there isn't one club left in Jersey that will book hardcore...Back to the basements, punk rockers!!!!

Back on the pop scene, the Bongos' debut lp, Drums Along The Hudson, is now in the stores, and if you haven't bought your copy yet, WHY NOT????? (The lp is reviewed in this ish, by the way)...


If you own a copy of the Individuals' Aquamarine, consider yourself the proud possessor of a collector's item...Individual Glenn Morrow notes the first pressing of that zingy e.p. has sold out and Infidelity has no plans to print more...Barring legal action by the Individuals' management, we'll just have to

wait for the release of the Individuals' album, recorded with Winston-Salem studio whiz Mitch Salem last Yuletide and which should be out on the Plexus label in May...

NEW BANDS: And boy have we seen a slew of 'em in the last month...Good reports on Quakes At Lima, a collegiate quartet from Montclair State featuring WFMU's program director Bill Melo on lead guitar; this is a strong new entry in the art/dance-rock genre, and they'd be even better if lead singer Bartlett would can some of the between-song patter...

Despite some negative remarks from out own Pattie Kleinke in this ish, a lot of people have been bowled over by the revamped Phosphores, now starring Stanely Demeski on drums, who reports that his other band, Autonomy, is looking for a new lead singer... Speaking of the 'phenes, they and the Raybeats, Cyclones, and Individuals performed for Maxwells owner Steve Fallon's surprise birthday party...If you weren't there, you didn't miss much; for a club that thrives on informality, the bands all did rather straight, shortened versions of their usual club sets (yawn)...

Anna Cerami has left the
(Cont. on page 11.)

LIVE: 

No Phun

by Pattie Kleinke

Phosphenes
Maxwell's, Hoboken
3/6/82

With the multi-layered synthy-track of the previous night's Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark show still ringing in my ears, I hopped on the No. 21 bus to Hoboken to catch New Jersey's own Phosphenes.

To put it bluntly, the Phosphenes (Tim Sherry, vocals; Bob Pezzolla, guitar; the mucho cute Ben Espo, bass; and new drummer Stanley Demeski) did not look as if they were having a good time on stage and the feeling was mutual. Actually, you couldn't tell what they were feeling, since they hardly looked at the audience (except for Stanley, who didn't have much choice). Sort of like the Graceful (sic) Dead or something.

The music: You wanna read about music, eh? Heavy, man; real heavy. Imagine, if you will, the guitar sound of Led Zep, the wail of John Lydon, & the gloominess of Joy Division without the haunting melodies. Sounds pretty catchy, doesn't it? My mind kept wandering too much to concentrate on the lyrics, but when I asked Tim Sherry the name of one of the songs, he said he didn't know either! I think by the end of the set, I was getting used to their brand of art/metal though, because the last two songs sounded pretty good. Slower and less noisy than the others.

If noise without the urgency of p--k is your cup of methedrine, check 'em out. Or catch their noisy but interesting demo on Maxwell's great jukebox. My editor sez the Phosphenes are getting better all the time - in fact, he says this show was the best he's ever seen them, and he flipped over their cover of the Modern Lovers' "She Crack'd."

Well...maybe. But next time, less feedback, more music, fellas?

Phunky

Wind At Night
Silver Dollar Saloon, Harrison
3/12/82

Union City isn't exactly the sort of place you'd expect to produce a hyper-groovy experimental Cubano-rock band, but there you are. Life is an adventure, ain't it?

Wind At Night shows what happens when a bunch of smart guys put their minds to making a pop band into something new, different, & original. Bob & Jerry, with umpteen years in innumerable Jersey pop bands between them, trade off on guitar, keyboards, and two-part harmonies. Tony plays a surprisingly supple bass and Bob supplies a crackling rock-drum backbeat. Stop there & you have another Jersey pop band; ok, but nothing to write home to Lester Bangs about.

But Wind At Night adds the authentic Latin percussion of Ray, which puts them over the top. You think Liquid Liquid is funky? Liquid Liquid is four preppy poseurs in button-down collars next to Wind At Night.

Songs? You want songs? Hey, this isn't Konk, a buncha overrated instrumentals that all sound alike. "Animalism" is strong tribal-chant positivism, "Red Sweat" is finger-popping funk-pop, and the far-out percussive stuff like "Rooster Head" goes off the scale; imagine the soundtrack music for Francis Ford Coppola's "I Walked With A Zombie" remake and you get an idea of the transfixing power of this primal Voodoo beat mixed with funky Uptown rock n roll grooviness.

This band belongs someplace with a big dance floor. Like Madison Square Garden. And soon.

See page 7 for another look at Wind At Night.

THE IMPORTANCE of BEING BONGOS

by Jim Testa

When I was a sophomore in high school and often called on to do sophomoreic things, my English teacher had our class choose a pop song and made us "interpret" the lyrics, just as we did with classical poetry.

I wonder what would have happened if the Bongos had been around back then?

The only known instance of the Bongos explaining one of their fanciful songs comes on the "Start Swimming" lp, when Richard Barone says, "This is a song called 'Telephoto Lens;' it's about lenses, obviously." And then the Bongos rip through an adrenli-h-paced version of that incandescent pop song, with lyrics that run from heartwrenching despair ("Complications keep you away from me...") to whimsical nonsense ("I won't be no sea bass tonight...").

Interpret that, Miss Shenloogian.

The Bongos don't need an interpreter and they certainly don't need need an English teacher (or rock critics posing as English teachers) mucking about with their music. The meaning of a Bongos song comes not from the mind but from the heart - from the joy in Richard Barone's soaring vocals, from the throbbing intensity of Rob Norris' bass, from the serendipity of drummer Frank Giannini and Richard Barone's intertwining voices, two instruments which magically become one the way Paul's voice used to wrap itself around John's way back when.

My pal Howard Wuelfing, the D.C.-based rock critic, used to say that the Velvet Underground made history because they proved that grownups could rock 'n' roll. The Bongos, very much in that tradition, go one better: They prove that grownups can still love rock 'n' roll.

cont. on next pg.



Rob Norris, Frank Giannini, Richard Barone: Bongos.
Photo: P. Marino

Bongos...

DRUMS ALONG THE HUDSON, on PVC/Jem Records, brings together seven previously-released cuts and seven new songs, recorded last year in England. Some Bongophiles are complaining that the record is half-obsolete at its release, but that overlooks the legions of new fans that the Bongos have picked up during their constant Do-It-Yourself tours of mid-America.

The first Bongos 45, "Telephoto Lens"/"Glow In The Dark," is impossible to find; the "In The Congo" e.p. only comes as a pricey 12" and goes for as much as six bucks in the Village; and the most recent release, the exquisite "Bulrushes" 45, was released by Fetish Records only as an import. So the availability of all the Bongos' work on one domestic lp not only makes sense, but one great record besides.

Not an album, really, but a document of a band's coming of age - that's what Drums Along The Hudson represents. Listen to the muted rhythm guitar Richard Barone plays on "Glow In The Dark" and compare it to the burning solo on "The Bulrushes." All the songs are great pop (Billboard Magazine, in trying to choose a Pick To Hit among the 14 cuts, said, "All of them!"), but the lyrics of "Clay Midgets" constitute great poetry too.

Richard Barone's lyrics are the Bongos' great constant source of wonder. A Barone lyric, an Edward Lear poem, a Rube Goldberg gizmo - these things don't exist to be interpreted or explained, but to charm, beguile, entertain.

6 "...an Edward Lear poem,
a Rube Goldberg gizmo,
a Rich Barone lyric..."

About six months ago, I had a chance to interview Barone and Norris in the apartment they share in a Hoboken tenement. As we chatted, the two pointed around their livingroom at some of the private possessions which have influenced their music.

Rob seemed especially proud of a stack of Beatle collectibles, while Richard boasted of the Muzon Synthesizer he found in Toys R Us for 15 bucks, and the Slinky he sometimes plays on stage, which he claimed came with the apartment. When I asked them about a set of Hardy Boys books in their bookcase, the Bongos dutifully nodded their heads and said, yes, Joe & Frank Hardy had been a big influence in their lives.



What novelist could envision a better, more perfect set of symbols! But then, to the Bongos, life is art; why shouldn't their music spring from their livingroom? Think of it: A collection of the most sublime pop ever recorded, a pile of toys, and a set of books designed to teach children such old-fashioned values as friendship, courage, & generosity.

There, in three words, are the Bongos.

#

Do the Talkin' Rooster Head!

by Gary Cahill

When in the course of human events it all becomes too much to take, a pseudo-sophic non-tradition dominates which artists make (it).

No.

Yes.

Confusionism: A concept, certain to attract the silently nodding (opiated?) acknowledgement of any Ancient Wise One, that says if the world's peoples cannot co-exist and seem intent on rising to face one final man-made nuclear dawn, can I at least have the last dance?

Polycultural Rhythm Dance Bands (or PRDB's), of which Wind At Night is one, historically spring up amidst hysterically good vibes or horrifically bad ones. It seems to me that rice and beans are an operative factor as well, being the only direct connection between Creole and Cubano I can conjure. But this music is not New Orleans Hoodoo, it's Union City Voodoo, with "Animalism" not only being the title of a popular Wind At Night carpet-cutter, but a clue to the underlying aboriginal drives that, loosed by apparent chaos in political circles, give rise to gluts of PRDB's to fulfill the need to merengue the blues away.

* * *

But Wind At Night is much more "heady" than that, what with the T-Heads' "Listening Wind" providing at least the cast for their monicker, if not their content; D. Byrne's talk-speak jungle-jamble a general drift and direction taken; and a

rock-solid drum-drive actually more akin to the Bush Tetras or the cement poured by Topper Headon under the Clash's dancing shoes.

The mix of Jerry, Bob, Tony, Billy, and semi-retired Ray Ole' on percussion is surprisingly musical and quirky when the bottom end hangs together, creating a primitive drive that can underscore the threat running through the aforementioned "Animalism," "Water Is Rising" (Apocalypse Then - Noah-rock about the Flood and...animals?), "Rooster Head" (Cubano-Animal-Sacrifice-Rock), and the Commie-conscious "Red Sweat."

Or is "Red Sweat" really Crown-of-Thorns Biblical-Rock, running an end sweep back towards Noah's Ark of bestial rebirth?

You see? Confusionism's the way to go. And it makes good copy.

MAXWELL'S

1039 Washington St.

Hoboken 656-9632

by Jim Testa

Just ask Adrenalin
O.D.

The band started last October when Paul Richard (vocals), Jack Steeples (bass) and Dave Scott (roadie turned drummer) grew disillusioned with their old band, the East Paterson Boy's Choir, and decided to start fresh. They enlisted Jim Foster on guitar and became Adrenalin O.D.

"We had a pretty clearcut idea of what we wanted to do," says Foster. "We bickered some at the start but we're really coming together now on exactly what we want the band to sound like." The E. Paterson Boy's Choir had been a pop-punk combo (ala' the Dead Boys or Generation X) but AOD was hardcore from its inception. "It was what we were all into at the time," notes Paul Richard. "It was pretty automatic that when we started the band we'd be hardcore."

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VISUALS BY
JAY GEL & TIMA

"We're from N.J. and we're proud of it"

With the local hardcore scene centered almost entirely in Manhattan, AOD's Clifton roots might well have proved a handicap. Not so, reports the band.

"We're from New Jersey and we're proud of it," stated Paul Richard.

"We don't pretend we're from NY like some pop bands do."

One problem that does go along with being from Jersey is the lack of venues. Hardcore, with the recent closing of the Silver Dollar Saloon, is banned from virtually every sizable Jersey club.

AOD has been lucky in that regard; the band played at Hoboken's Mile Square City during promoter Joe Foy's brief reign of terror there, and more recently at the Silver Dollar before it closed.

"It's not that we're from NJ," says high-school-aged drummer Dave Scott. "Any hardcore band is going to have trouble finding clubs to book them."

"As long as we can play someplace once a month, we're happy," adds Richard. "We don't have to gig every single week to be happy."

Yet the band's casual approach to its music covers up an underlying pride and sense of ambition which the band itself may be unaware of. When the band played one of its debut gigs last November at Mile Square City, the short songs, stiff stage manner and overall incompetence of the band made itself felt. But at two recent area gigs, Adrenalin O.D. has proven that this is one hardcore band which is not prepared to slag along on second-rate performances and third-rate preparation in the

in the name of "anarchy." For instance, the band rents rehearsal space in a studio rather than just playing in somebody's garage or basement. Three members of the band are either full or part-time students, so the band's budget can't be very large. Their decision to invest their limited pocket money in improving their sound proves their seriousness, even if their offhand manner and tongue-in-cheek answers to all my questions leave the impression that AOD is nothing more than four cocky post-teens on a lark.

One of the nice parts of Hardcore is the sense of community that the bands share. When AOD opened for Even Worse at the Silver Dollar, the band, to put it politely, blew the veteran Even Worse out the door. The show so impressed EW's Jack Rabid - one of the NY hardcore movers-and-shakers - that Jack got Timmy Sommer to play AOD's "Pauls Not Home" on his "Noize: The Show" and helped the band land the headlining spot at one of the Peppermint Lounge's Hardcore Sundays.

Unlike a lot of thrash-and-bang Hardcore, AOD extends itself beyond noize. Guitarist Jim Foster, in-



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A.O.D.

from p.9

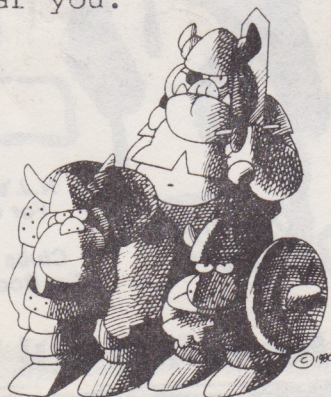
fluenced by surfrock and Link Wray, helps write AOD's energetic sturm-und-twang melodies with vocalist Paul Richard. Like many other NY/NJ-area Hardcore bands, AOD's strong point - what I think marks NY/NJ hardcore from the LA and D.C. varieties - is a wiseass sense of street humor that comes through in songs like "Mr. Rodgers Is A Child Molester" and "Old People Talk Loud."

And maybe the brightest thing about AOD's sense of humor is that the band isn't afraid to laugh at itself, because my fave AOD songs are the gently self-mocking group anthems, "A.O.D." and "Paul's Not Home."

Every time I've seen A.O.D. the band improves. At the Pep, with a decent P.A. for maybe the first time in its career, the band really came alive. Jim Foster's guitar took on a new urgency and crispness, and Dave Scott's drums banged and crashed like a hopheaded Gene Krupa. The crowd, a pretty sensible bunch for a change, slammed and listened in-tanselve w/o any major damage or minor scuffles to spoil the fun.

And it was nice to see some of the guys from AOD's Jersey hardcore brethren, Green Shirts Suck and Suburbicide, there to root them on.

Look for A.O.D. at A7 in April and coming soon to a teenage riot near you.



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More Hardcore &
Luna Legion!!
Who??

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the Beat...

Aquarian Weekly, where she had been a beacon of good taste and enlightened listening as Manhattan Edition editor...Has anyone noticed that since JERSEY BEAT appeared, the AW has beefed up its coverage of local bands? The paper still prints this news under the pseudonymous "Bea Flatte" by-line though - why not assign a flesh and blood reporter to this beat?...

In other media news, the Jersey Journal has replaced its resident rock critic Jim Fusilli (who has since married & moved to New York; buona fortuna, James!) with canned features from its parent syndicate, citing budgetary reasons (double yawn...)...One wonders how local papers in this state expect to have any readers in ten years when youth-oriented features are the bottom priority in every case...

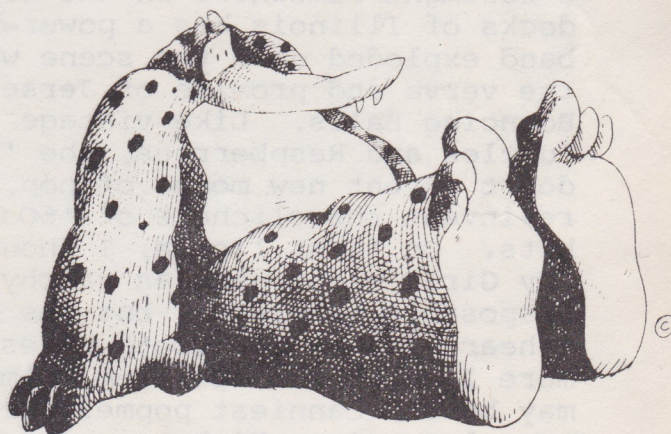
And in still more media news, perennial Jersey faves The Uncle Floyd Show has finally been syndicated and will soon be polluting the airwaves in Boston and Rochester, to name but two unfortunate affiliates...Rumor has it that WNBC Channel 4 in NY has also bought the show for late-night showings... Veteran Aquarian scribe Tony DeSena now penning gags for Floyd & Co....

Dizzy & The Romilars are on a rampage - opening for the Flaming Groovies at an obvious label-shopping gig at the Bottom Line, then headlining the Peppermint Lounge and the Ritz on budget nights... We wish them luck, but on the basis on the Bottom Line show, we question if the band is ready for the big time. Undistinguished songwriting, an utter lack of chops, total absence of hooks, instrumental flair, distinctiveness...

This is the kind of band that gave "New Wave" a bad name...The fact that the band looked stiff and scared on the Bottom Line stage was proof enough that it didn't belong there; the terror-stricken grimace of bassist Angelo Zip told the whole story...We wish every struggling band well, but jumping into the limelight before one's time doesn't do anyone any good, least of all the audience...Back to the garage for this bunch for some finetuning, we hope...

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REVIEWS

"Take Me Away"/"Its Me"
The Abstracts - Post Modernist
Records (P.O. Box 62, Nutley, NJ)

Given the recent plagiarism flap over "Shake It Up," maybe it's only poetic justice that the Abstracts' debut 45 borrows so heavily from the Cars' patented model of jittery keyboard & guitar pop. Take away two points for derivativeness, but the Abstracts still win the remaining 98 for catchy, surefire formula rock n roll. Not quite bubblegum, not quite punk, but something bubbly and energetic that falls in the middle.. B+ (J.T.)

"My Girl"/"Love Is The Right Thing"
The Bouncing Balls - Tender Records
(47 Carol Rd., Westfield, NJ)

Not since the Shoes emerged from a basement somewhere in the boon-docks of Illinois has a power-pop band exploded onto the scene with the verve and promise of Jersey's Bouncing Balls. Like vintage Turtles and Raspberries, the 'Balls don't invent new modes of pop, but re-invent the cliché's of '60s hits. On first listen, I thought "My Girl" might pass as catchy disposable bubblegum, but the more I hear this record (both sides!) the more I think the BB's Tom Polman may be the canniest popmeister to come along since Nick Lowe (or, at the very least, the Bay City Rollers). And to think that the band hasn't even begun to make its presence

felt on the club scene yet. More, please. And soon. A+ (J.T.)

"You Know How Hot (It's Been Getting Around Here)"/"Lunatics, Lovers, And Liars"
Chris Moffa & the Competition -
Change Trajectory Music, 48 Scudder
St., Garfield, NJ 07026

The way this club can rip it up at a dance club, I figured their first 45 would be a winner. Live, Chris Moffa's inexorable Anglophilia often makes the Competition come across like Clash-mania - not Strummer & Jones, but an incredible simulation. And this record owes a debt to early "City Of The Dead" era Clash too. But...

So why am I humming the driving verses of "Lunatics, Lovers, And Liars" on my way to work in the A.M.? And why did I instantly choose "You Know How Hot" to cap off a tape I just sent an out-of-town pal that showcases what I think are some of Jersey's hottest hometown cuts?

Moffa calls this stuff "contact music." I don't know about that but I do know powerful, driving, hooky rock and roll when I hear it. And hey, it's got a good beat and you can dance to it. I give it a 98...oops, make that A. (J.T.)

"Crazy Hearts" - 4 song e.p.
Crazy Hearts - R Records (202 E. 7th
Street, New York City 10009).

Here's a record I know you'll